

UMPIRE POSITION – OUTLINE GUIDE

1. PREP/PRE-GAME:

- A. Have complete uniform. (See NFHS Mechanic Book for Officials Uniform. Weather will dictate uniform to be worn. BRING BOTH UNIFORMS.
- B. Conduct pre-game conference if R is detained.
- C. Go with Referee to visit coaches and ask if all players are properly equipped. Make ruling on any player that is specially taped.
- D. In pre-game, discuss with Referee in regards to penalty enforcement.

2. TOSS OF THE COIN:

- A. Have the ball of the team on your side of the field in a 3 or 4 man crew. Back Judge has this responsibility in 5 man. Line Judge will have the other team's ball.
- B. 5 man crew = ON THE FIELD WITH THE REFEREE 3 MINUTES PRIOR TO KICKOFF. You will bring in captains for the team opposite the press box
- C. 4 man crew – Be on sideline with the Head Linesman WITH GAME BALL OF THAT TEAM.
- D. Record the results of the coin toss and check for accuracy with crew.
- E. After toss go to 50 and meet with crew until everyone goes to positions.

3. KICKOFF:

KICKOFF:

- A. On the press box side of the field, position yourself on the receiver's 12-yard line slightly out of bounds. Insure that the sideline and coaches area are clear.
- B. You have secondary responsibility for knowing if the ball is kicked into the air or directly into the ground. You will be responsible for kicks near the sideline in your area. You have the sideline from the goal line of the receivers to the goal line of the kickers. After the kick, know it's general direction then move downfield slightly trailing the runner. Watch for fouls by either team, kickers out of bounds, ball going out of bounds, etc. Pick up the runner as he enters your area and switch from blocking to the ball carrier. When the ball becomes dead and you have the spot, square up and do not close on the spot. Hold your position closer to the sideline, watching for fouls. When all is clear be prepared to get the new ball from the Back Judge. **The ball is the last thing to be concerned with.**

On Side Kicks

- A. The Line Judge will move to K's free kick line
- B. The Umpire will move up to R's free kick line
- C. The Umpire and Linesman must stay on the receiver's restraining line until the ball has crossed the restraining line or been legally touched. Do not come forward to watch the action around the ball. Let the officials on the kicker's restraining line come up the field.

4. UMPIRES'S POSITION ON SCRIMMAGE PLAYS:

- A. 5-Man Crew – Stay over the ball until the ready, then move about 10 yards deep while the team is in the huddle. Move forward right or left to a position 5 to 7 yards deep at the snap. Vary your position depending on the type of play. General rule: Away from the tight end. Favor the short side of the field. The general position is inside the offensive tackles at the snap. It is OK if the Umpire is on the same side of the ball as the Back Judge. In a huddle situation you do not need to wait for the ready for play
- B. 4-Man Crew = Same as 5-Man. The referee is over the ball for Try's and Field Goal.
- C. Concentrate at the snap on three of the five interior offensive linemen and their actions, and those of their opponents. Trying to observe five offensive linemen at one time results in nothing being seen specifically!
- D. Count the offensive lineman numbered 50-79: make sure they have five. Exception: 5 not required on scrimmage kick formation. Know the ineligible for pass plays. Locate the tight end –the five players inside him are all ineligible.
- E. MOVE UP TO THE NEUTRAL ZONE WHEN YOU READ PASS, LOOKING FOR A RECEIVER RUNNING ACROSSING PATTERN (DON'T RUN INTO HIM).
- F. KNOW NUMBERING RULE EXCEPTIONS.G. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR COUNTING THE OFFENSE/KICKERS ON EACH PLAY. Confirm the count with R with a fist directed directly at the offensive team.
- H. In a hurry up offense—remain over the ball until the Referee indicates that the Ready-For-Play is imminent—communicate with the center to allow you time to be in position.
- I. In a well-marked field spot the ball while facing the offensive team.

5. LOOK FOR

- A. Look for holding, illegal use of hands – keep line play legal, let them know you are there.
- B. Know what “keys” are and how they will help direct your attention to what possible play action may be. Example: Pulling guards normally lead you to the direction of a run or trap blocking, “off side” linemen going down field – a running play, pass protection blocking.
- C. Observe center adjustment of the ball and check for illegal snaps or movement of the ball.
- D. Check out player complaints thoroughly and for several plays.
- E. Check for legality of defensive signals and warn immediately if possible interference.
- F. Check for equipment that becomes illegal through play.
- G. Observe offensive linemen that are restricted with their hands for false starts.
- H. Use rubber band to note lateral placement of the ball between hash marks for a previous spot reference if an incomplete pass. Use of rubber band for downs on the other hand is optional for umpires.
- I. Be sure and stay at the ball on all plays when the offense is over the ball. Otherwise be in position as soon as you are ready.
- J. If lineman (punts) has their elbows on their knees, they may legally move. They are not restricted. (Watch for this on punts and shot gun formations).

6. FOLLOWING AND HELPING AS THE PLAY DEVELOPS:

- A. Be prepared to shift your eyes from original line play to action around runner on sweeps and QB pitchouts. Be alert for illegal crack back blocks and clips. Observe the fringe area behind and in front of runner.

- B. Know where the line of scrimmage is if option pass occurs. If down box is behind you on the opposite side, turn around and locate where it is.
- C. Responsibility is yours for blowing ball dead on plays up the middle of the field but never blow whistle until you see the ball.
- D. Spot the ball on most all plays during the game. (Cover this in pre-game). If you move into a side zone become the relay for the Referee to spot the ball.
- E. Make sure flanks don't move until you get their forward progress. Always spot the ball facing the official you are taking progress from.

7. RETRIEVING THE BALL – YOUR JOB AS RELAY MAN:

- A. Either you or the referee will always spot the ball. Key off of him.
- B. IN A 'HURRY UP' OFFENSE, WHEN THE BALL BECOMES DEAD IN THE SIDE ZONE, TAKE THE PROGRESS FROM THE CROSS FIELD OFFICIAL SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO TURN AROUND TO SPOT THE BALL. The Umpire will solely be responsible in a hurry up offense for spotting the ball.
- C. In getting the ball from the flank officials, it is not always best to get the ball in a straight line, step into either team's backfield so you can be seen.
- D. If referee goes into the side zone you should be at the hash mark to receive the ball, if he stays at the hash you should be in side zone.
- E. Acknowledge all flank officials' signals to start or not start the clock to the referee. Keep the referee informed.

8. INELIGIBLE LINEMAN DOWNFIELD:

Any player with a number 50 to 79 is ineligible, regardless of position.

- A. Know all ineligible players on a scrimmage kick formation.
- B. Move up to the line on a pass play, and turn on a pass beyond the line to assist on trap passes. On long pass plays stay with lineman to observe any unnecessary action.

9. MEASUREMENTS;

- A. 5 and 4 Man Crews = Take forward stake.

10. DUTIES AT TIMEOUTS:

- A. 5 and 4 Man Crews = Standing over the ball.

11. PENALTIES:

- A. In pre-game, discuss whether referee wants you to march penalty yardage on fouls.
- B. Stand with referee to be sure options are given correctly.

12. BETWEEN QUARTERS:

- A. Record down and distance, position of ball, and team in possession.
- B. Make sure ball is spotted correctly to start the new quarter.

13. TRY AND FIELD GOAL:

A. 4 and 5-MAN CREW

B. At the snap the Umpire watches the snapper and any infractions against. Line up opposite of the referee in a diamond formation.

C. In case of a fake/broken play if there is a running play to the open side of the field try to get to the goal line to help rule on a potential score.

D. IF A TEAM IS GOING FOR A TWO POINT TRY, LINE UP IN YOUR NORMAL POSITION.

Swinging Gate (5 man)

Once the formation is shown the flank officials stay in position. The Umpire moves back under goal posts and watches center. If the team then shifts flank officials stay in position and the Umpire moves up.

14. UMPIRE'S PREVENTIVE OFFICIATING METHODS:

A. Talk to players but don't talk too much.

B. Compliment a player for a good block or play in a NEUTRAL MANNER being certain that another official doesn't have a flag on the play.

C. On punt plays make mention that if the punter is roughed it will be a first down.

D. On scrimmage kick plays, make sure the nose guard is aware that any unnecessary roughness on the snapper is a foul.

E. Officiate at the point of attack and be sure that the foul has an effect on the play. There is a lot of judgment involved in the calls that an umpire has to make. Many times your best call will be a no call.

15. SIGNALS AND COMMUNICATION

It is important that you pick up and signal all Out of Bounds, Incomplete Passes, etc. Often yours signals in the middle are the only ones seen especially by the Referee who is not looking downfield on passes. Also communicate results of plays to the Referee.